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Barnes, Julius Howland

Production and living standards

[S.l.]

[1923]

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Production

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The American Philosophy and Its Proven Accomplishments

The prefatory remarks which follow were made by Mr. Julius H. Barnes, President of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, in support and explanation of a resolution on production introduced by Mr. Charles H. Mac Dowell, Chairman of the American Industry and Trade Committee, at the Second Congress of the International Chamber of Commerce held in Rome during March 18-25, 1923. The resolution met with unanimous approval and was adopted by Congress.

The American Delegation favor the adoption of this resolution, although in several respects they should have preferred to see its statements put more forcibly and more clearly in support of a theory of production which they believe to be vital today.

In citing the experience and recording the conviction of America, I do so in no narrow spirit of national self-esteem

but because America has, under certain peculiarly fortunate conditions, developed the social and economic results of the theory of expanding production beyond that reached elsewhere in the world.

America realizes with due humility that great natural resources were bestowed on it by nature. It recognizes the freedom of experiment afforded it by a state of social relation free of age-old traditions and prejudices which might otherwise hamper its ready adaptation. But while recognizing these conditions, which favor it beyond many other peoples, America also claims with due pride that it has developed most largely the service of enlarged production in its contribution to human progress and, therefore, to human happiness.

It realizes that the general average of possession, the thousand things of daily use which, by division among all the people, constitute what is expressed as the "standard of living," can only be increased in the hands of the individual by production which multiplies its output more and more all the time. It is convinced, moreover, that this expansion of human possession by having more things to divide can only be effectively created by producing more things per individual worker.

Aggregate production, to be true, is a thing greatly to be desired, but aggregate production secured with greater numbers of workers fails of the full human service possible by expansion per individual.

I will illustrate by the story of American agriculture.

The official census of 1920, as compared with the previous census of 1910, showed sharp increases in the quantity production of all the standard farm crops of America, such as cotton, wheat, corn, tobacco and live-stock.

Yet, the same census records 1,700,000 fewer workers engaged in agriculture in 1920 than in 1910.

This marked increased per worker in agriculture was secured largely by the introduction into farming of mechanical devices as recommended in this resolution.

Now, if these 1,700,000 workers had simply been displaced to unemployment, the story would not be one of social gain, but this was clearly not the case since there is no unemployment anywhere in America.

Moreover, in the last twenty years this story has been repeated in a hundred ways. There have been developed four major industries, the automobile, the motion-picture, the electrical industry and the chemical industry. These four indus-

tries, practically non-existent twenty years ago, today furnish the livelihood of thirty million people, three-quarters of the entire population of Italy.

Beyond all this has run the parallel and similar expansion of old and new industries; each requiring workers and each securing its complement of service by this great process of expanding the production per individual.

The history of this great social development displays that enlarged production, and especially enlarged production per individual, itself creates and enlarges its own market, both by the economy of costs which follows such production and by the enlarging buying-power resulting from the earnings which increased competitive employment, accompanying increased production, affords the worker.

More and better food, shelter and clothing; carpets, furniture and table wear, electric lights and appliances, phonographs and pianos, bathrooms and telephones, motion pictures and automobiles; all these owe their wider distribution in common use to this great economic process.

No truth has been so clearly demonstrated as that this practical philosophy of enlarged production contributes directly through human service to enlarge the means of human happiness.

Today, the issue is directly joined between this theory of intensified production with its vast human service, and the stifling fallacy that there exists in the world only a certain limited amount of work to be done, and that by restricting the output of each worker more workers can be employed to perform this given quantity of production.

The man who in his normal hours of work restricts and reduces the amount of effort and the amount of product which during those hours he can sustain; the organizations of men which designate and limit a day's work to be the laying of 300 bricks when a fair workman could lay 1200; the organizations of men, which, by the power of concerted action, force observance of arbitrary rules requiring several men in the discharge of tasks, otherwise performed by single workers; the men or organizations of men who oppose in this short-sighted deadly social fallacy the introduction of scientific appliances which release men to other productive industries, these men and these organizations are the active enemies of human progress.

Their attitude is a direct social injury to every man, woman and child. This story of limitation of output is especially a blow at the opportunity of their fellows, for workers require more and more ar-

ticles for common use, which are brought more and more, by the inevitable economics of intensified production, within their reach.

The directors of industry, who must study and understand the vast economic law which works thus through adequate production, must state the issue with clarity and conviction.

It must be made clear that the injury is one far wider than to the welfare or earnings of Industry and reaches into the human opportunity of every home.

To fail to make clear the truth of this philosophy of production, to omit on every occasion by word or act to emphasize its vast human service, would be, on the part of the directors of industry, a social betrayal unworthy of them.

Therefore, the American Delegation strongly urge the adoption of this resolution and strongly urge its explanation and amplification into language even more clear and direct on every possible occasion; that there may come a wider understanding of the vital human service involved.

Rome Congress

Industry and Trade Group

Resolution on Restoration of Production

Submitted by the American Delegation

WHEREAS it is increasingly clear that the national wealth and community and individual prosperity depend to a large extent for maintenance and increase on expanding individual production in all lines of industry and that the greater the production the greater the benefit to all concerned, and

WHEREAS, international credits to facilitate production and exchange of goods can rest only on a sound basis of material values, and

WHEREAS, real costs of production in various places and in various lines remain abnormally high and efficiency of production and individual output frequently remain lower than before the World War, and

WHEREAS, the present depressing burden of after-war responsibilities to be liquidated by taxation of workers and

producers, can be best alleviated by increasing individual production and especially by increasing the output of manpower, through the service of science and invention, which should not be hampered or defeated by artificial rules and arbitrary restrictions, and

WHEREAS, national figures of accumulated wealth and the published records of particular lines of industry and particular industrial establishments offer eloquent evidence of the benefits derived from the introduction of scientific and efficient methods,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by this Congress of the International Chamber of Commerce, that the following principles be recommended for increasing production:

1. Enlargement of production by every invention and mechanical device which offers economy of production.

2. Elimination of all artificial restrictions and recognition of the need of maximum individual output on the part of all concerned in production.

3. Stimulation of individual effort by personal remuneration based on relative individual output.

4. Governmental policies which encourage existing industries and the creation of new industries—especially by a

lowering of taxation as soon as possible.

5. Adoption of governmental policies which will permit not only taxpaying ability on the part of directors of industry and workers, but also opportunity to save and give the incentive of security in the enjoyment of the earnings of exceptional ability and effort.

6. Recognition and assurance of the advantages of private ownership and operation of business enterprise as contrasted with state ownership and operation, such state operation having been proved by experience to involve burdens of unnecessary personnel and other expense, and difficulties of adjusting charges for service, all of which hamper rather than stimulate production and economy.

7. Taking immediate steps to see that men engaged in non-productive pursuits are diverted as soon and as generally as possible to productive labor.

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